

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on January 9, 2017 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Janet Venecz presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.  
Invocation by Janet Venecz.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Councilman Woerpel nominated Councilwoman Venecz as President.

Councilman Torres nominated Councilman Markovich as President.

Councilman Markovich declined.

ROLL CALL VOTE (Venecz as President)

AYES: Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: Markovich

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 8/1/0 COUNCILWOMAN VENE CZ  
2017 PRESIDENT

Councilman Kalwinski nominated Councilman Spitale as Vice President.

ROLL CALL VOTE (Spitale as Vice President)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 COUNCILMAN SPITALE  
2017 VICE PRESIDENT

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of December 12, 2016 and place on file. AYES: ALL



PUBLIC HEARINGS

16-36 An Ordinance to Amend Ord. 4487, Ord. 4851, Ord. 6099, Ord. 7429, Ord. 7830, Ord. 8211, Ord. 8471, and Ord. 8845 also known as Chapter 35 of the Hammond Municipal Code as it Pertains to the Hammond City Court and the Orderly Transition of Cases

The following spoke on the proposed ordinance:

Atty. Randy Godshalk  
Judge Amy Jorgenson  
George Stoya  
Juan Andrade  
Atty. Nathan Foster  
Mary Ellen Slazyk  
Atty. Peter Katic  
Ola Smith  
Atty. Robert Sorge  
Denise Sorge  
Alvin Cheeks  
Atty. Joe O'Connor  
Nancy Cobb

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs announced that the Hammond Park Board Commission has changed their meetings from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month to the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month due to conflict of schedules.

Councilman Higgs read a notice of cancellation of the Hammond Economic Development Commission meeting that was to be held on Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> due to no pending business before the commission.

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from the Hammond Fire Department asking residents to be extremely careful in their use of space heaters and other alternative heating sources.

Copy of the correspondence is attached to the minutes.

Councilman Torres read correspondence from Assistant Pastor Eddie Lapina, First Baptist Church of Hammond, regarding the condition of the streets, sidewalks and curbs which have become a hazard in the areas around the church which he will be forwarding to the City Engineer.

Councilman Higgs read a response letter from the City Engineer, Dean Button, regarding the remediation of the area around the First Baptist Church of Hammond.

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from Mayor McDermott regarding the city's creation of an electrical border of licence plate reading cameras making it impossible to enter the city of Hammond without your license plate number being scanned and logged into a data base.

Councilman Higgs announced that the City of Hammond in conjunction with the Black History Coalition Commission and the Hammond Human Relations Commission are preparing for the 2017 Annual Black History Celebration which will be held the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of City Hall on Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10 a.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance & Council as a Whole Committees - Councilman Woerpel - Brought out 16-36.

Community & Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:

Tues., Jan. 17; East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; 6:30 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center

Thur., Jan. 19; Hessville Crime Watch; Jean Shepherd Center; 7 p.m.

Wed., Jan. 25; Jefferson Crime Watch; Jefferson School; 6:30 p.m.

Thur., Jan. 19; South Hammond Crime Watch; 7 p.m.; Hammond Housing Authority Building

Thur., Jan. 12; Whiting-Robertsdale Crime Watch; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to take a five (5) minute recess.

AYES: ALL

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE

16-36 An Ordinance to Amend Ord. 4487, Ord. 4851, Ord. 6099, Ord. 7429, Ord. 7830, Ord. 8211, Ord. 8471, and Ord. 8845 also known as Chapter 35 of the Hammond Municipal Code as it Pertains to the Hammond City Court and the Orderly Transition of Cases

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved for passage.

Councilman Torres - You know we heard a lot of testimony this evening and various reasons why we should keep the court. Among the speakers, I didn't hear one that talked for keeping the court. I hate to say it but I believe the decision is already been made by a lot of our councilmen. For some reason the Mayor was earlier heard gloating that he had his five votes so I don't know whatever happened to democracy. This is supposed to be a legislative body, that's the executive, we make the decision even though he has the right to lobby and

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Torres cont. - campaign and all that because he believes in that. This decision is just too great of a magnitude to be made tonight and like Atty. Katic suggested, perhaps a work study should be held, whether it takes a month or two or three, what's the hurry. Court is gonna be here three years regardless whether this ordinance passes or not tonight. So, I'm gonna make a motion that we table this ordinance and have a work study session and bring in professionals. For one thing, we're getting all different kind of figures of what the court will make on a yearly basis...

Council Atty. Berger - There's a motion to table. It's not subject to debate. I don't know whether there's a motion or not.

Councilman Torres - Yes, there's a motion to table.

Councilman Markovich seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE (table 16-36)

AYES: Torres, Higgs

NAYS: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

ABSENT: None

Motion failed

2/7/0

MOTION FAILED

Councilman Markovich - I know we heard a lot of discussion and things here tonight and a lot of good points were brought up by a lot of distinguished people here and citizens and attorneys, and I would request at this time that the Mayor speak and disseminate all of this. Him being a lawyer himself and also being a Mayor and also being a businessman, that several good points were brought up. That, you know, the possibility exists and there's no sense in getting into any drag down debate here tonight or anything, that the possibility may exist, if the Mayor wished to do that, that, you know, it's like a trial, a one year probation to let them prove themselves and, you know, that would be a wise person to do that. I'm not singling out the Mayor, I'm talking about the Council. We've got a lot of information here tonight. That you can't come to harsh decisions like this. This is based on, you know, the city of Hammond. In a way we can be made the laughing stock around here that we're gonna be closing the court when East Chicago has there's and they have financial problems. Gary has their court, they moved their jail to Crown Point. If the jail's gonna be an issue, send them all to Crown Point. That's a no brainer. That takes care of that. That takes care of even that amount of money that has to be spent on it. Somebody said something to the effect that it takes four or five policemen to run the jail. No, they said seventeen policemen to run the jail. Yeah, I guess we can throw those guys on the streets. Put them on the street to combat crime we don't have to worry about running a jail. If we're making so much money from the Feds for the amount of prisoners that they have there, let them take it over. But there's been so much information brought forth that has to be disseminated. We were spending like \$36 thousand to move city hall to a building that was bought by somebody else and we're still spending money to do that. We spent \$26 thousand for a study. We gave \$250 thousand to the South Shore Train that nobody wants just to do an Environmental Impact Study. Like one guy said on the local radio station this morning, when you hire somebody to do a study and you pay them a quarter of a million dollars they're not going to come back and tell you you're full of crap. They're gonna come

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - back and tell you, "Oh yeah, this is a good deal. This is the best thing since sliced bread. Go ahead and spend one billion dollars over the next thirty years or whatever is eight years." You know that's another subject or whatever. But there's all kinds of money that we need to look at here and I guess I'm asking the Mayor, you know, to give, how's that song go by the Beatles, give peace a chance. I mean, give them a chance, you know, I mean George brings up a very good point. That retaliation from the State. We all know that, like he said, Cline Avenue. You know, and how long's that been, seven, eight years already and now they want to make it a toll road. Who's gonna pay for it? We are. The State's gonna reap all the money from that thing. I guess that's where it's at. It's a monumental decision to make. You don't want to throw the baby out with the bath water without looking at everything. But I was saying earlier, you know, we spent \$250 thousand for the South Shore Study, \$36 thousand to see if we move City Hall, why not get an independent person, accountant, CPA, because you know what, a CPA is not gonna lie. They're gonna get paid to do the right thing. You pay somebody \$250 thousand to do a study whether that land over there on Erie Street or whatever is tainted or not they're gonna come back and say no but you've got to do this, this, this and this to clean it up. You get a CPA, they're licensed, they're gonna do a thorough job. And be that as it may, let the figures speak for themselves. If it says it's not a money maker, and if you throw out the jail, you know, a few other things and all of that then go with it. But, you know, everybody throws this \$1.5 million or this or that or whatever, I mean, we're getting figures from both sides. Who's right and who's wrong? We don't know. We really don't know. And if there's a little bit of politics involved, well, there's politics in everything. There's politics involved for all nine of us sitting up here and for the Mayor and Clerk sitting there too, and the Judge. It's all politics. But that's the nature of the beast. That's the way the system is made up. I mean justice and law it might not be the best system we have but it's the only system we have and we have to make it work. It's like I stated earlier, at the end of these buildings it says law on one end and justice on the other end. This building wasn't built for the Mayor or the City Council, it was for justice for the people. It was a WPA Project, you know, for new construction just like the Civic Center was. You know, new construction, to make jobs and so forth and that. But, everybody brings up good point and, you know, I'm a little bit ticked that where's the Lake County Bar Association? The one attorney brought up a very good point. Where are their officers? Where is their board members? Where are they at? Are they afraid of retaliation or anything or whatever, you know? That's their own profession but yet none of them are even here to protect their own profession. How many people have gone to small claims court where it says you don't need a lawyer you can go there and do it yourself. But the bottom line, by the time you go there and supposedly you say you try to practice law, you know, you're not a lawyer, the judge, whoever's sitting there is gonna say you don't know what you're talking about. I suggest you get a lawyer. They're there protecting their own profession. But the Lake County Bar, not even one person to come here and say anything, you know, and I don't want to get into anything more. I'm putting my faith, or I'm just asking the Mayor, you know, to work with people, to work with the Council, and for the Council. You know, we were put here for a reason, to make the best choices that we can with all the information that we have, and if you don't have all the information how can you make a justified decision? You can't. How's the saying go, figures lie and liars figure. Who knows what all of these figures are right or wrong. Like I says, get a CPA to do it. We're not CPA's here. We can't disseminate and understand all of this information. And that would probably be the best way to go with it. You know, I'm just asking. That's where we're at. I guess I'm getting cut off.

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Higgs - No, Councilman Markovich, it's not the fact that you're being cut off but the reality of it is that we were all elected to do a job and when I initially ran for office it was because I had a dire and a willingness to want to serve the people of my district and of the city that I love so much. I've been attacked, abused, and all the above, sitting in this seat representing for what's right for the people. Also it is the responsibility of my constituents to come out and voice how they feel about certain things that go on in their city. I can sit here and do the job 24/7 but if my community don't come out and voice their concerns, guess what, it falls on deaf ears. That's my frustration. The reality of it is that we need a city court. We have a lot of information. I understand there are cuts that need to be made. But to digest this information so quickly and make a decision tonight, it seems as though as it's being pushed fastly upon all of us. Whether or not some discussions or back door meetings took place, I don't know, but I know what goes on so to say politics that may be. Some of the attorneys that's not here, they may be upset or feel as though they are gonna be attacked. I don't know. I can only voice my opinion as the 3<sup>rd</sup> District Councilman of the city of Hammond. I fought for a number of things and I've watched my colleagues personally attack me here for fighting for what's right and I will continue to do that but the reality of it is, in saying all of that is that we need a little more time and I'm asking the Mayor and my colleagues to give it a little more time before you make a decision of this magnitude that's gonna affect your family, my family, and all the citizens of this great Lake County. All we need is a little more. Just a little more time. That's all I'm asking. If you want to close the court fine, just give us a opportunity to at least get some people here that can give us the right information that we can digest it, go over it, review it, have some committee meeting, then come up with a decision as to whether or not it needs to go. I've heard the Judge say, in her comments, that if we get rid of the jail it will save over \$2 million. Do we need the jail? There are other cities that are functioning currently without a city jail. Are there other areas that we can cut, possibly, within the Court's budget? There are other options that could be possibly made but tonight I don't think none of us are prepared to vote on something of this magnitude that's gonna affect so many people. I applaud you all for coming out because some of these faces, in my tenure as being councilman, I haven't seen you here in this Council Chambers. So obviously it's something that's really, really, really affecting you all for you to show this evening. But, again, I'm only one of nine. I've already voiced my concerns and how I feel. I pray to God I don't get attacked again about voting a certain way.

Councilman Markovich - I've got a question. Mayor, do you plan to respond or help us a little bit or anything?

Mayor McDermott - I was at the Thursday meeting that you set up, Council as a Whole, that was requested by Councilman Markovich. I showed up and I testified for an hour and a half and I had to leave and it went on for another half hour to forty five minutes after I left. I said everything that day. The same thing that I said during 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. What Councilman Markovich wants me to do is repeat myself a third time because he didn't show up to that meeting. He's obviously too busy. The only councilperson that didn't show up for that meeting, he could have educated himself at the Thursday meeting. And I want to applaud the Council President for setting up meetings like that so we could discuss these issues so that when we get to 3<sup>rd</sup> and Final we're ready to vote. Councilman Markovich made an intentional decision not to show up to that meeting, now he wants to rehash the whole meeting over again. If that's the case, Councilwoman, I don't understand why we have committee meetings. That's why, I imagine, the Council President set up a committee meeting so that we could discuss these issues like we did, Councilman Markovich if you were there maybe your questions would have

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - been answered. You skipped and now you want to rehash the whole thing over again. I don't want to play your game.

Councilman Markovich - I do not realize that this whole city and this whole court depends on whether Bob Markovich is at a committee meeting that wasn't even advertised in the public, on the radio stations, or anything but after the fact. Now we know we all have families. Who in their right mind would schedule a meeting at 3 o'clock, 3:30 in the afternoon, during the Christmas time when everybody is out of town? You did a disservice Councilwoman Venecz, to the Court employees and to the Clerk employees because they could not even attend that meeting and all of their jobs depended on that. Yet they were not able to listen to any of that information. Why wasn't that...you know a responsible person would schedule a meeting 5, 5:30, 6 o'clock when everybody's home from work, when the attorney's aren't in court, when city employees who aren't working can come there. And you know what Mayor, when you get a call that your daughter is stranded at an airport because they're snowed in with ten inches of snow and their flight is delayed by two hours and she's not coming back in town where I got to pick her up. God forbid, shame on me then. Maybe you ought to blame that on God for dropping ten inches of snow on the airport where she was stranded and her flight was cancelled and I had to sit at an airport for two hours waiting for hopefully that the plane was gonna make it in. So shame on me because I had a daughter, okay, that I couldn't come to the meeting because I had family responsibilities. Too bad that maybe some of these other council persons don't have family responsibility but yet I'm gonna be ostracized. Councilman Kalwinski wasn't there, you're not picking on Councilman Kalwinski, he wasn't there, he was working. And Councilwoman Venecz you know damn well he was working but yet you scheduled a meeting while he was working. Did you even call any of us to see if we were available? If we were in town, out of town, or anywhere near, no. You just did it on your own. That was wrong. That was a disservice to this council and all the city employees and the Judge and Clerk's Office. Because they didn't get a chance to come there. And, you know what, we have a video guy here that we pay for some reason or whatever, why wasn't that meeting taped where somebody could go ahead and watch that meeting. Was that meeting video taped? No. Nobody could go and go back and look at it. I couldn't make it. Councilman Kalwinski couldn't make it. But could we go back? But yet, it's not that important and there I'm not attacking you but you're saying you don't want to repeat it for the third time. Well this is the first time a lot of people are here tonight, for the first time. Including me and Councilman Kalwinski. Him being a councilman, I'm sure he would like to have that information given to him. Passed out so he can disseminate, so he can make a wise man's decision. That's all we're doing is asking for information. Don't come here and attack us, well, you didn't come. I mean, from what I understand, a councilman says we had this meeting but Councilman Markovich ain't here. Whether I was there or not Mayor, you shouldn't even brought that up tonight. I had family responsibilities, and you would do the same for your family if they were stranded at an airport and you would be concerned that she's there by herself in a snow storm. You'd make the same decision that I made. And with all this information that came out tonight and that day, Thursday, that's why it needs to be .... hire a CPA to look at everything. What are we afraid of? What are you afraid of, that it might come back that it's not a good deal? What are we afraid of? It's a classic example with the South Shore Train. And Mayor I commend you, we were against the South Shore Train until we end up getting something out of the deal, you know. You know, \$300 million investment what's gonna cost us \$27 million over the next thirty years, it's a good return on our investment and so forth and all of that. But you don't hear the people calling me because they're kicking them out of their houses. Where the hell are they gonna buy a

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - house for \$50 thousand? Where they gonna move? Where they gonna go? There's three meetings coming up. One January 18, 6:30 the 18<sup>th</sup> at Irving School on the South Shore. January 19, 6-8 at Centennial Park in Munster. I bet you those meetings are gonna be packed. People are gonna come there because you saw the articles in the paper. You know, a lady buys a condo in Munster, the realtor didn't even tell her that hey, we're gonna take your house a year from now. I mean, Councilman Spitale, you're a realtor, I hope you didn't handle that case. You know, I would be pretty well peeved if a realtor sold me a piece of property knowing that in a years time they're gonna take it away from me after I moved in.

Council President Venecz - Excuse me, Councilman Markovich, we're on the topic of the Court.

Councilman Markovich - Well, I'm just throwing it in there. It goes with the study. It goes with other meetings because this South Shore, they're having meeting after meeting and they're bring out information and you know what, this court is more important than a South Shore Train to pay a billion dollars and you know what, there's a report out. Now, some of us attended a meeting for diversity and homes that we want to go ahead and build homes in Hammond. And that report came up and was put up by Redevelopment Commission. It says that we'd be better off building 100-150 thousand dollar homes where they want to build these stations and the South Shore and build them homes there so people can move in and not worry about all the people that live in Munster and Dyer that have supposedly all the discretionable income that they're gonna go ahead and ride that train for it to save them seven minutes. It's not gonna happen. Again, I'm sorry if I'm going off the tangent but it's all relative because the South Shore Train has been here for 100 years and we haven't seen any new housing development around the train stations either in Gary, East Chicago, Hammond, Munster they have a Dyer station for the Amtrak and they shut that one down. But yet you have a meeting last Thursday with all the money guys at Wicker Park and it's a cheerleading thing. Two hundred, three hundred, businessmen and elected officials. Well, this elected official wasn't invited and I'm sure none of these other elected officials were invited to that meeting but yet they want us to come to these other ones and come up with answers and so forth and all of that. But be that as it may, I mean, it's important. Mayor, I'm....

Mayor McDermott - Councilman, I'll make sure you get invited to the next ....

Councilman Markovich - Well, I'm not worried about that but I'm asking you for tonight. A reasonable person would postpone it for at least a year. Give the lady a chance. We can get into politics or whatever. If Kevin Smith or Kris Kantar or somebody else was appointed judge I'm sure we wouldn't be closing this court down. Because they're the judge. They live in Hammond. There's a list here, when you go to court, if you don't have a lawyer, there's thirty four lawyers on here on this list that they pass out. Only six live in Hammond. Only six have their offices or live in Hammond here. We've heard it already, that those that are here. Poor Randy, they burned his place but he wants to stay. We even have city employees on this list that their law office ain't in Hammond and they don't even live in Hammond but yet they're on boards and so forth. They represent the city. Making big money. Making more money than you guys are making with these landlord evictions, I'll tell you that. But I'm not here to embarrass anybody. I'm not here to embarrass the Mayor. I want to work with him. I'm just asking that a reasonable person, councilwoman, would take all the information and disseminate it and sit down and talk. Give it a chance. We got nothing to lose...well, we got everything to gain and a lot to lose in that

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - respect. It's just gonna be a matter of .... the last person in the city turn the lights out. We're a second class city by population. Thank God we're still the largest city in the county. But a second class city goes by the amount of population. But if we keep getting rid of services and reasons for people to stay here. We are gonna be a 2<sup>nd</sup> Class city because we're not gonna be able to provide all the amenities that people want. They can bitch about the school. They can bitch about the pot holes. Like the Mayor said he got more calls and complaints about the snow plowing. Hey, you know what, God put it there he'll take it away. The Street Department and them they did the best they can as far as plowing snow. Stay home for two or three days. Don't drive crazy or whatever. Life goes on. But this is important. It's just a matter of where your priorities are. Whether I'm preaching to the choir or not or whatever, but my God this is a big thing here. Information is being forthcoming. Hire a CPA and spend the money and let the chips fall where they may and if it comes back it's not a good deal, hey, we did the thing that a reasonable person would do and that is to get all the information and come up with an answer. Not just ..... I didn't realize that I had a time limit put on me. Is there a time limit?

Mayor McDermott - I'd like to point out that the figures that the Council received from the City Controller also matched the records that were provided to us from the City Clerk, also matched the records that were audited by the Indiana State Board of Accounts who are all CPA's, and they work for the State of Indiana. That's a fact.

Councilman Higgs - It wouldn't even take me a year to digest it and research it if we just had enough opportunity and enough time to actually have some workshops, it wouldn't take me a year to figure out what's best. Right now I just don't feel none of us is prepared to really say yes to something of this magnitude. And of course we had the former City Judge Pete Katic who sat on the bench as a City Judge here in Hammond and certainly if anyone would be more educated in the process of how the court runs I think he would seeing that he was a former sitting judge here in the city of Hammond. The reality of it is that, you know what, I've been on this council for thirteen years and it seems as though every year I'm fighting for something to stay in my district. When is this gon pass Lord? That's my question. If it ain't City Hall being moved it's the Health Department. If it ain't the Health Department it's the busses. When am I gonna see some economic development? When am I gonna have an opportunity to tell some young folks in my community that a new vibrant business is being built in my district? I'm looking forward to seeing that moment and picturing it happening and I pray to God, and I would do whatever is necessary to help in this effort whether it's fly to Washington, D.C. to ask Donald Trump if he can provide us with a new business. Whatever it takes at this point. But I would like to see that in my tenure as councilman. That's all I have to say. Make sure you put that in the Times, don't forget it okay.

Councilman Torres - You know, the Mayor mentioned that the figures that we got were correct. Well, I got three different kind of figures. Two from the Clerk's Office and of course one from the Controller's and actually they're all different. I mean, they're close but they're different. So, that's why we need an independent CPA or consultant of some sort. They can actually give us the actual figures that we can go on. Also, when you spoke last Thursday at Committee Meeting nothing was recorded. This is gonna be historical moment, whatever decision this council makes and I would think the Mayor would want, since he was the one that proposed this ordinance, the reason why you feel this court should be abolished in Hammond. A lot of people before you and early settlers, starting from early settlers, went through a lot of trouble to get these departments and this entity so to service the people. Here you come and you're basically dismantling our city department by department and

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Torres cont. - our judicial entity. What are you going to be Mayor of? I mean other mayor's sharpen their pencils again and put them to the budget to see how they can balance it without eliminating. The last two mayor's, like I mentioned, added something to the city, not took away. Your father was good enough he left us the marina. Mayor Dedelow, even though it really started by your father, the golf course. So they added something to the city. Your legacy is gonna be the take away Mayor, dismantler. The Gary Judge, he's (unclear) I think he's the only one in the area that's got a statue erected in front of City Hall over there. But he built Gary, or at least he helped build it. If you ever get a statue it's gonna be the (unclear) the dismantler of Hammond. Because you're destroying the city. Let me be the one to tell you, you are destroying the city department by department.

Mayor McDermott - Thanks, Councilman. I appreciate it.

Council President Venecz vacates the chair. Council Vice President Spitale assumes chair.

Councilwoman Venecz - First of all, there was proper notice and with regard to the committee meetings that we had. At the last council meeting when this ordinance was introduced it was referred to Finance. Councilman Markovich at that point in time asked for Council as a Whole and he was obliged. The meeting was scheduled for Council as a Whole and Finance for Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 p.m. Proper notice was given to all the members of the Hammond Common Council; Robert Berger, Council Attorney; Mayor Thomas McDermott; Kris Kantar; Robert Golec; Heather Garay; Judge Jorgenson; Sharon Daniels, who's the ADA Officer; WJOB; the Times; Post Tribune; and CR Publications. At the time that we had that committee meeting, let me back up, before we had the committee meeting I spoke with Clerk Golec and I got figures from Clerk Golec's office. Clerk Golec reiterated to me several times that the Controller's figures, the Clerk's figures and the State Board of Accounts figures all matched. I gave every single council person all of that information. At the time that I met with Clerk Golec coincidentally nobody else had asked for that information. I did my homework. After the committee meeting, which was last Thursday, it lasted two hours, many of the people who are here this evening were there and they spoke that evening. Very compelling and very convincing arguments in favor of keeping the court open and I respect everyone's opinion. However, after that two hour meeting, which was Thursday, we had Friday, Saturday, if you want to work on Sunday, fine, and today. Each of those days I had a conversation with the Judge. Have any of you? My point is, I went through all of the figures. I went over Clerk Golec's figures. We did find an inconsistency that Clerk Golec pointed out. We were all notified of that on Thursday night. So, my point is, we started off with figures supposedly from the Judge's Office. There was no author, no source on the information that we were given at the time that the ordinance was introduced. Then I spoke with Clerk Golec and I got figures from him and then out Controller went through every single line item in relation to the Court and the Jail, which as it was explained to me at the time, there are many moving parts to this. Things that we don't think affect the Judge's Court are affected by the way of the Jail. There were other things. So we were getting information as it was coming along. So my point is that since this was originally introduced the beginning of December that all of us had more than ample time. We met for two hours and we had over the weekend to go over the information. To imply that we are not getting proper notice, maybe we have to have an ordinance that each and every one of the notices that go out for the committee meetings or any other meeting are sent by certified mail and that will be an additional expense to the Council office.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Markovich - Point of Order. Once the president has relinquished the chair you're not allowed to go back up there until this final discussion and debate is over with and we've actually voted on it.

Councilwoman Venecz - Is that true?

Councilman Higgs - Yes, that's Robert's Rules of Order.

Councilwoman Venecz - Alrighty, councilmen.

Councilman Higgs - I'm just gonna say this, I mean, I know, I feel as though, for some reason or another, I feel the decision has already been made as to how this vote is gonna go but I'm just requesting my colleagues to give it some additional time. Now whether or not they do it or not, I have no idea. But I would hope that they would reconsider and give it some more time.

Mayor McDermott - I want to answer Councilman Torres' charges about me being the Mayor that takes everything away. I think the thing I'd like to clear up is I've been very consistent as your four term Mayor. Elected each time outside of one with 80% of the vote. So, obviously Hammond supports me. Over the years they've proven that time and time again. Eight times actually. Longest serving Mayor in the history of the city, Councilman Torres. I've been very clear about one thing since I've been Mayor, is cutting the services that are redundant. Cutting the services that are redundant. Meaning if we don't do them, somebody else has to cover them for you. Alright. Like, for instance, if I cut Animal Control, the County does not have to assume it. So if I cut Animal Control, for instance, dogs would be running loose and nobody would be pick them up. So, can we cut Animal Control? Yeah, we can, if we want animals running all over our city. That would be a silly thing to cut. If you cut things like jail services. Does the County have to cover your absence? Yes. If you cut things like Health Departments the County must provide those services. City Sealer, the County must provide those services. So if I've been consistent about cutting something, it's about eliminating redundancy in our Government. Because we don't have the money that we used to have last time you sat in that council chair, Councilman, in the 1980's. When you sat there, compared to now, we have \$20 million less of property tax revenue, Councilman. And I didn't make the decision on the City Jail. There's only one person on the Council that was still here when the decision to build the City Jail was made and that's you. It was built when I took over as Mayor. Maybe this should have been discussed when you decided to build the City Jail when you were a Councilman under Mayor Dedelow's administration. I took over and the jail was built. And I started eliminating redundancy. When you eliminate redundancy over the years, now granted it was a controversial cut. It was the City Sealer, the City Health Department, did it at the same time. It saves us about \$1.5 million annually. That was ten years ago. We saved \$15 million in 10 years and we're spending that money in other areas right now. We're not spending it on redundant services. If you save \$1 million dollars by cutting the Court, or if it's \$1.2 or if it's \$800 thousand, wherever the number falls. Over time you're saving that into eternity. You're saving...say the number is \$800 thousand, you're saving \$800 thousand every year. In ten years you save \$8 million. Twenty years you save \$16 million. And guess what, the County has to do our job for us. They have to pick up the load there. They have to. It's part of the County's responsibility. If I cut the Hammond Police Department does anybody have to cover that? No. So we're not gonna cut the Hammond Police Department. If I cut the

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - Hammond Fire Department does the County have to provide those services? No. That's why we're not proposing to cut the Fire Department. We're talking about cutting the fat, the redundancy. This is something that doesn't have to be covered by us and we lose money. If we don't cut this type of stuff what are you gonna .... Councilman Higgs, you and I have been working together for thirteen years, I've never heard you have one cut you've agreed to, ever, except for today, the jail. That's the first time in thirteen years I've ever heard you say anything about cutting the budget. You're always defending the status quo. We can't do that anymore. Because, like I pointed out, I would be interested to see how many of the people that testified before you today voted for the tax caps to be placed in our constitution that strangle our budget to the tune of \$20 million a year. I'd be interested. Because I bet a lot of the people that are crying right now about the closure of the Court also voted for the tax caps that killed municipal budgets. I'm not the grinch that wants to take everything away, Councilman Torres. I am the smart Mayor that is cutting the smart things to cut, having other people pay for it so we have more money to do things like rebuild the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, rebuild the 3<sup>rd</sup> District, instead of just watching it go away. Covering services we don't need to cover. Jail, let's talk about it. We could say a lot of money. I am very, very interested. We don't have to do jails. Why do we do jails? We're losing money. Let the County cover that. That's their problem. We have big enough issues maintaining our Police force, maintaining our Fire Department, our Code Department, and keep the city running. That's hard enough. We don't need to cover things that we don't need to cover. I've been consistent, Councilman Torres, in eliminating redundancy. I'd appreciate it if you get that straight.

Councilman Torres - Okay, what may be redundant to you is needed services for the taxpayers. Now, you can take that argument, like, for the elderly citizens at the Humphrey Building or Hammond Elderly, one of those buildings over there and they don't look at as the Health Department being redundant.

Mayor McDermott - Are we talking about the Health Department or are we talking about City Court?

Councilman Woerpel - Point of Order. He's already commented twice on this issue.

Councilman Torres - No I didn't.

Councilman Woerpel - Unless you're commenting on the Health Department you've spoke twice about the Court.

Councilman Torres - I'm answering the Mayor.

Mayor McDermott - I wasn't talking to you.

Councilman Torres - You weren't talking to me? You called my name.

Mayor McDermott - I was just saying your name.

Councilman Torres - You're imagining things too?

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Mayor McDermott - If the Council feels the same as Councilman Torres then they'll vote his way. This is your decision Council. This is your decision.

Councilman Torres - No, no, Ms. Chairman, I have the floor, and you're right, no the Council's not gonna vote my way. I can not give them jobs. I can not give them board positions. I can not take them out to lunch. I can not do the things that you can give them.

Mayor McDermott - You can take them out to lunch.

Councilman Torres - I can not afford it. Besides you don't use your money anyways. You use the taxpayers money to do it.

Councilman Torres - They're gonna vote...you've got six in this, in favor of it. I know you're nodding your head because you've been gloating since you announced it. It took two Council meetings for something that should have taken maybe two years to discuss. You got it over because you know you got six votes here. You only got three independent Council's on this that think for themselves. That's Councilman Higgs, Councilman Markovich and myself. All the others are bobbleheads. Yes, what can I do for you.

Mayor McDermott - It's unfortunate that Councilman Torres feels that way about his colleagues. It's unfortunate. Because I don't really see it the same way you do, Councilman. I tell you what, I don't offer Board spots. I don't offer jobs to any of the Councilmen in front of me. Okay. It's interesting you feel the way you do about your colleagues. You've only been here a couple months and you've got it all figured out, Councilman Torres. You walked in ....

Councilman Higgs - I'm gonna say this, Mayor, in front of the public. No matter how I vote, can you promise me on this floor that when I go in your office and try to schedule a meeting I won't be shoved and pushed to the side?

Mayor McDermott - I don't know what you're talking about.

Councilman Higgs - That's all I'm asking. Because if it's something concerning my community and I need to get to my Mayor and talk to him I shouldn't be pushed aside.

Mayor McDermott - Since Councilman has been a Councilman I bet I've had close to a hundred meetings with him.

Councilman Higgs - I didn't say you're not having meetings with me. A number of times I've tried to meet with you before we got to this point. I came to your office this week and they said you were in a meeting, you would get back to me.

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Mayor McDermott - Sometimes when you walk into my office and say, "I need to meet with the Mayor." I have meetings, Councilman.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to call for the question.

Councilman Markovich - We talked about notices, about the meeting and all that. I've already answered that.

Councilwoman Venecz - Point of Order. I thought Councilman Woerpel called for the question.

Councilman Woerpel - We need a vote on the call for the question.

Councilman Markovich - I have information here that needs to be entered into the record. If I knew that I was gonna be shut off and not be able to present the information that was given to me after the fact then I would of spoke up at the Public Forum. But we all know that when you speak at a public forum none of that becomes record. What I have to say becomes record here because it's part of the council meeting and it's very important, you know, when they close this thing. George brought up earlier about retaliation and Mayor you know it, and I know it, the State is controlled by the Republican Party as well as the State Rep.'s. Anytime they want they can take away all of our gaming money. If you're worried about something in 2020, you know, because of the tax cap, all they got to do is get a finger, you know, a bee in their bonnet down state, they can take all of our gaming money and he knows that. Now, yes I was on the Council when we built the new police department, which was needed. You go to that police department now, can you imagine how in the hell they operated downstairs in the basement all of those years with a jail. I mean, it's unfathomable to even think how they operated. I mean thank God we built them a new police department with a jail. Now, the thing the Mayor's not saying is that the original plans at that time also was to build the court over there too. To build a court chambers. But because we didn't have the money, or the bonding ability to do it, we kept the Court here with the understanding the Court would stay here. But now look what you would have done when we built that thing over there and we had the court and we'd be shutting the court down and we'd have another empty building over there.

Councilman Markovich read an informational document. The document is attached to the minutes.

Councilwoman Venecz - First of all, this is the second meeting in a row that we've had such a disrespectful display. There was a motion on the floor to call for the vote. I seconded that and I would like a vote on call for the vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE (to call for the vote)

AYES: Kalwinski, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz, Spitale

NAYS: Markovich, Torres, Higgs

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

6/3/0

MOTION CARRIED

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

AYES: Kalwinski, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz, Spitale

NAYS: Markovich, Torres, Higgs

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

6/3/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9363 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

17-01           Appropriating the Proceeds of the Annual Action Plan and dealing with other matters  
                  pertaining to the Expenditure and Plan Proceeds for Program Year 2017

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading by title, referred it to the Finance Committee with a public hearing on February 13, 2017.                   AYES: ALL

RESOLUTIONS

17R-01           Authorizing the Filing of an Annual Action Plan Application and Designating  
                  Signatories for Payment Voucher on Letters of Credit for the 2017 Annual Action  
                  Plan Programs

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved for adoption.

Councilman Spitale - This is just authorizing the staff to file for CDBG, ESG & HOME.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Markovich

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION R01 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Kalwinski - Just to clarify a few things from earlier. I tried to get my voice heard but it apparently wasn't. So, as I was talked about regarding not getting to the committee meeting, which is correct. I thought I would be able to get there but sometimes work interferes. However, I had separate conversations with, I believe, no less than four council people after that committee meeting about it. Talked with the Mayor. Looked at all the numbers provided by the various parties. And talked even with the Judge as late as today. So I just want it to be known that while not being there, everybody was more than willing to give me pieces of information from either the meeting or from some of the paperwork if I had questions about how the numbers were contrived. So that's the first thing. The second thing is I want to thank all the people who approached the podium today to give their heart felt expressions one way or the other about what to do on this issue. It is controversial and it is tricky and

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Kalwinski cont. - we do have to make up monies that are going to be even further exacerbated come 2020. I believe that the court is just part of the process in trying to find the millions that will be tasked to find by 2020. As we go on we'll be looking at other sources too. I just wanted to be clear because it was hard the last time during the conversation to be heard.

Councilman Markovich - I was just wondering why, if he was talking about the court and everything why he didn't talk during the discussion when we were acting on that ordinance that you're gonna talk about it now.

Councilman Kalwinski - As you heard, I made requests several times however not heard or not acknowledged.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to send a letter to Police Chief Doughty in regards to Flick's Tavern on Kennedy Avenue in Hessville to find out what kinds of calls for service have been there in the last two years.

AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: January 12, 2017

Councilman Higgs - You know, during this discussion I watched some of my colleagues, how they responded to one another, it's a new year, I'm hoping that you all can find a happy medium in trying to look out for the best interests of the people and not take personal attitudes or actions against one another. We may not see eye to eye on everything but we were all elected to represent the people and, you know, it just disturbs me when I sit here and watch some of the actions but of course I've dealt with it too. But it just makes no sense. We need to work together regardless and it puts a bad taste in the audience...I'm sure they're scratching their head on the way home. All I could do is pray, basically.

Councilman Torres - In regards to that, Councilman Higgs, you know when I ran for this election in 2015 I was kind of warned that I would be walking in to a rubber stamp of a council and I was willing, I didn't believe it at the time, but after seeing what happened tonight with the council totally disregarded the wishes of the people. There wasn't one in the audience there that was for the closing of this court but yet this council had already made up its mind. You had the Mayor dine you, or whatever he did, he got you to .... we don't need a council in this city, let the Mayor run everything. (Unclear) He might as well just control the city. We're just sitting here as puppets, all of us, because three of us who think independently don't have no say so in anything. So, let's just him control the city. We'll stay at home and cancel all of these meetings, I don't think we even have to have meetings, and collect our salaries and just stay at home. The Mayor can think for us, all of us. He's gonna ... I know we're supposed to thank him ten years from now and twenty years from now for saving all this money but he's taking away all these services from the city also. Services that the taxpayers need. They work hard and are willing to pay for and he's not willing to listen. Tonight I'm almost ashamed to be a member of this council but I will continue.

Councilman Woerpel - I guess since we're re-visiting this, I would just say that I hope we can act a little bit more professional as a body when we make the next \$4 million worth of cuts that we have to make by 2020. When I hear all this talk about why the decision now, you know, or we were provided information, we were

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Woerpel cont. - provided information that showed up in our packet that my colleague, Councilman Torres, said came from the court. Yet when everyone from the court was in here was asked where did that letter come from, none of them knew. That paper claimed a \$54 thousand savings. But he says, "I got it from the court". The court says, "You didn't get it from me". Heather has been the city Controller, I think, four or five years, I don't know how long, but I'll take her word for it because it's backed up by Clerk Golec's numbers, which is backed up by the State Board of Accounts. But I take offense when this conversation starts going in the direction of "you're all corrupt" or starts going in the direction of "what are you trying to hide". I wasn't trying to hide anything. I wasn't trying to hide it on December 12<sup>th</sup>. I wasn't trying to hide it last Thursday. December 12<sup>th</sup> we spent an hour and a half on this topic. Last Thursday we spent two hours on this topic. Tonight we spent about an hour and a half that made sense and then it was a pie fight. As a councilman, that's embarrassing. You know, somebody said, "What did you hear out there?" I did not hear anybody say keep it open. I understand that. I talk to my residents. I've talked to my residents probably more than most of you guys do because of the job I had. And I tell you this, not a one of them said, "keep it open". I'm telling you what the residents of the 5<sup>th</sup> District told me. You might not like what I have to say but I'm not gonna lie to you. That's all I got to say.

Councilman Emerson - You know, I get a little frustrated being called a rubber stamp and all that stuff that my colleague here just said. I resent that. I have voted when other people did not vote for things, one time it was eight to one. I was the only one who voted no. So I don't appreciate that and if you want to work together that's not a good way to do it. But I will tell you another thing. I got more calls on alcohol being sold on Hohman Avenue at the Quick Stop than I got on this court. I got 100% more calls as a matter of fact to be honest with you. So if you're saying all these people are so concerned with it, they didn't call me.

Councilman Higgs - I can only speak in terms of some of the issues I've dealt with, with my fellow colleagues, and a couple of them are new but I know for instance when I was sanctioned and ostracized here as one of your colleagues I was totally insulted and offended by the actions of my colleagues. I thought it was really, really, disrespectful and distasteful because the reality of the situation you didn't know what occurred and how it happened and Councilman Opinker is no longer on the Council but he led the way on it. And didn't even know what the hell was going on. I took great offense for my other colleagues to vote in favor of something that they don't even know about. Where were you when I was being harassed? Where were you when I was actually being physically attacked by someone who just recently moved back in this community that don't know a damn thing about Hammond? So, to sit up here and say, "Oh, I'm not this and I'm not that. I'm not a rubber stamp." I don't give a damn what you are but treat people the way you want to be treated. That's all I have to say about it because that's still bothering me to this day.

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for a Notice of Intent to Consider on proposed Ord. 16-37 be set on 1/23/17.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Emerson, Woerpel, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Higgs, Rakos

Motion carried

7/0/2

MOTION CARRIED

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilwoman Venecz - This Wed., Jan. 11, 6:30 p.m. at O'Bannon Elementary School is the first Mayor's Night Out of the year. I encourage all residents to come and ask any question that your little ole heart desires of the Mayor, of the department heads and find out things that are happening in our city.

Councilman Torres - You know I didn't bring this up under the register of claims but I notice on the claims that there's a lot of CDBG and I know we're gonna have a committee meeting with them with Redevelopment but here there we just paid CR Publications \$1,776 out of CDBG. Now I've asked the Redevelopment Director at the last Council Meeting for a summary of all the CDBG projects that were done in my district. I haven't gotten a return letter yet. But it's interesting, I would like to know what the CDBG funds are supposed to use for because this is nothing but for publicity, what do you call it, the McDermott newspaper here because it's nothing but his picture on it and his promos all the time (unclear) and here I am trying to get equipment for my parks and try to get street done. I've got about \$15 million of streets to be done in my district. So, he's using that and there's other objects in there but since we're pinching pennies now, we should be, I would like to ask CDBG, I believe director is Owana is in charge of that if the money could be spent on these type of things.

Council President Venecz - Would you like a letter to be sent to Phil Taillon and Owana Miller?

Councilman Torres - Yes.

Council President Venecz - Okay, so moved. Is there a second?

Councilman Markovich second.

ROLL CALL VOTE (letter)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Torres

NAYS: Kalwinski, Emerson, Woerpel, Venecz

ABSENT: Higgs, Rakos

Motion failed

3/4/2

MOTION FAILED

Councilman Torres - I have an item number 117, The Times, on the Register of Claims, and again it has to do with the Mayor's Gaming. I understand that we as a council this year we're getting a \$1.1 million per district but we're limited to how we spend it. We can only spend it on streets, lights, parks, I think that's all. But the Mayor has no limit on how he can spend his money. He spends it on publicity. He spends it on, here's one for Pepsi, so why is that. Can I get a letter explaining that, I'm asking, I guess, to the Mayor's Office, why he has that privilege and we do not.

Council President Venecz - Do I have a second?

Councilman Markovich second.

Councilman Higgs - I need clarity as to what he's requesting.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Council President Venecz - He explained it, you were off the floor.

Councilman Higgs - No, I was here. I heard him when he said the Mayor's Gaming money. Okay, the Mayor has Gaming money, what are you looking for in terms of (unclear) because I can identify some of the things that he utilizes the money for. So is it something in particular that you are looking for. You need to identify it. Otherwise you gon be back here asking and requesting the same information.

Councilman Torres - He has a discretion of spending his Gaming money any way he sees fit. Here he is paying CR Publications again, \$440. He's paying the Lakeshore Chambers of Commerce \$5 thousand. How come we are restricted as councilmen and he is not. So, I would like that (unclear).

Councilman Woerpel - Correct me if I'm wrong but I don't recall Councilman Torres ever voting no on the claims. So what are we asking the Mayor to do?

Councilman Higgs - I think so we're not in a long discussion, and really I got a headache, this meeting has really wore me out. But the reality of it is I think he's requesting what the Mayor spends him money on. Initially when the boats came here there was a covenant signed and an agreement was signed as to how the money would be allocated per district as well as with the Mayor. The Mayor has a discretionary fund it's like a slush fund. So everybody hearts and minds are clear. He can utilize the money...we can not, as councilman, we can only use it for sidewalks, curbs, lighting, infrastructure, parks. The Mayor has flexibility with his casino funds. He can utilize it for paper, whatever.

Council President Venecz - So Councilman, would you like a copy of the ordinance outlining the use of the Gaming Money so you can see, that is a starting point?

Councilman Torres - Yes, I can get a copy of the ordinance but I just wanted it explained why he has no limit on how he spends his money. Here's his other paper (unclear) to CR Publications for (unclear). It seems like CR Publications is just getting money from at least two funds and there's no telling from what others. So, I'm just interested.

ROLL CALL VOTE (letter)

AYES: Markovich, Torres, Higgs

NAYS: Spitale, Kalwinski, Emerson, Woerpel, Venecz

ABSENT: Rakos

Motion failed

3/5/1

MOTION FAILED

Councilman Higgs - So you meant to tell me one of my fellow colleagues requests a letter to be sent, y'all gonna prevent him as a councilman that represents a portion of this city. I get it though because I had to deal with it too. You mean to tell me, I mean, this is a question, maybe one of y'all can answer it. How long is this gonna go on? Because he deserves the same courtesy as any one of us here. And certainly if you requested a letter I wouldn't be opposing you sending a letter for information. Come on y'all, really? Are y'all serious, really? Is this what we're gonna have to deal with in 2017?

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Council President Venecz - Councilman, as long as you're slinging mud things are ... that's not the way to accomplish things.

Councilman Torres - I just wanted to say there's other sources that I can get this information from but I just want it in the minutes that it was rejected by the council, that's all.

Councilman Markovich - Wed., January 18, 6:30 to 8:30 at Irving School it's gonna be about the South Shore Train. You know, the \$27 million we're gonna be spending here. The taxpayers money. \$900 thousand a year for the next thirty years. If you can't make that one, on Thursday, Jan., 19, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. it's gonna be in Munster Centennial Park. That's where the fireworks will probably happen because those people in Munster aren't happy about them taking their houses away from them. So, that's just a point of interest on the South Shore. They had that meeting with all the business people last Thursday, I believe, or whatever, which none of us were invited to, but from the way the Mayor portrayed it on the radio it was like a cheering thing to push the train forward and help Pete out and so forth and all of that. So, that's what that is. But this is for the people that don't have the money that they're gonna take their houses away so we've got special meeting on, like I said.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Rev. Cobb - Congratulated the Council for having balanced the budget on the backs of the disenfranchised and of the unfortunate, the less fortunate.

Laurie Czulno - Brought to the Council's attention that Fast Lane Foods on 169<sup>th</sup> and Hohman has applied for a liquor license and this is something the neighborhood wants. There are inherent problems that are associated with liquor licenses. Neighborhood has started a petition and letters of opposition. Asks Council to back them.

Mary Ellen Slazyk - Disgusted that the majority of the council can't represent the people. Instead rubberstamp for somebody who acts like a dictator. Dictators destroy what they can't control. This is reprehensible.

Peter Katic - You win some you lose some but we don't always agree. But I know that we all care. I'm hoping and I'll be available if asked to participate in anything we can do to figure out, continue with, a solution. I respect each of you whether we agree or disagree.

Ola Smith - What you did tonight let the citizens of Hammond know that you care little about us. Your minds were made up before you even got in here. You will feel the repercussions at election time.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

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Janet Venecz, President  
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

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Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the Common Council Meeting on January 23, 2017.

Time: 9:05 pm  
cb